EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Georgetown ISD adopted a Learner Profile that inspired building after building of exciting and adaptable learning environments. Teaching and learning were shifting across the district. As staff and district leaders began imagining how their new administration building would be designed, they drew inspiration from their history and the learning model they had established for students. One that focused on relationships, collaboration and innovation.

The Hammerlun Center for Leadership and Learning is more than administrative offices, it is the nerve center for adult learning and creativity in GISD. The district wanted to change everything about how they operated; they wanted the use of space to be intentional; they wanted adult learners to pull together and remove silos; they wanted to model collaborative and forward-thinking behaviors that would trickle down into schools. They needed a space that would perform to a high level to meet their high expectations.

The project is an adaptive re-use of a historic and iconic 1924 school building; it is the place where GISD first began, a true return to the roots for the administration team. Georgetown ISD wanted to preserve the district’s storied past while recognizing its critical role in the future. The oldest school building in the community presented a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to capture the essence of context with future.

The last iteration of the building was an elementary school. A beautiful and iconic structure housing traditional classrooms and enclosed corridors, walls and floors that blocked the beauty beneath. Once complete, the change was immense. Everything is open, transparent or movable. Light spills through the space. Raw materials reference the past and blend well with a modern design solution.

Design choices, furniture and adjacencies are a reflection of the district’s expectations for adult learning—the same expectations they have of teaching and learning at the school level. It is not a “central office on a hill,” it’s a facility that brings adults together to create, to learn, to support and to grow as individuals and teams.

“I had no idea this space could impact adult behaviors the way it has. It has changed everything about us. We are modeling collaboration greater than I ever imagined. The building is doing more than we thought it would do for us.”

DR. FRED BRENT, SUPERINTENDENT, GEORGETOWN ISD
AN ADAPTIVE RE-USE OF A HISTORIC AND ICONIC BUILDING.

SCOPE
Adaptive re-use of a historic school building into a progressive learning center for adults. Renovation to three buildings on the site; exterior refurbishments and new landscaping.

$13,167,527, construction cost
72,000 sf (renovation)
9 acre site
THE COMMUNITY
Georgetown, Texas is located 30 miles north of Austin. It is one of the fastest growing communities in Texas; a community that is steeped in tradition, that holds true to its roots yet embraces innovation. Georgetown ISD serves over 12,000 students with nine elementary schools, four middle schools, two high schools and two alternative campuses.

STAKEHOLDERS
The entire community had a voice in the Hammerlun Center—whether directly or indirectly. When Georgetown ISD started the process to redefine the Learner Profile (and reshape school design) they involved the community through educational summits, online surveys and focus groups. While at the outset, the community was utilizing their voice to shape learning for students, in reality, their vision would shape learning for adults as well.

Under the leadership of the superintendent, the Hammerlun Center began to take shape. The team of district leaders and staff defined how adult learning should be a reflection of student learning, and vice-versa. The administrative staff who trains teachers and provides support for professional learning and strategic vision should collaborate together, work together, in the same manner students are expected to learn within their schools.

When it came to refurbishing the building, the local historical society also played a role.

“Community members get that this building is a reflection of our vision and our mission, and it has been overwhelmingly received. I think that this space has truly been an anchor to the belief that we are a foundation of this community, that public education is a foundation of this community.”

DR. FRED BRENT, SUPERINTENDENT, GEORGETOWN ISD
**CHALLENGES**

**Honoring the Community**—The historic school building is located in the center of town, blocks away from the town square. The physical prominence of the site to the community, combined with the emotional connection, cannot be understated. Residents, grandparents, parents and community leaders all stepped foot through the building. Generation after generation of Georgetown residents learning and growing in a beloved campus. The community felt strongly about how the renovation would be approached.

Honoring the community while creating a space to push GISD forward was critical. From a macro to micro level, everything was considered.

**Supporting a Culture Shift**—Before the renovation, the “central office” was not located in one building. Departments worked in physical silos, often miles apart. Most administrators had offices, further separating colleagues. When the idea of an open work environment was pitched, it was met with concern for privacy and comfort. It posed a challenge to create a space that could successfully bring all departments under one roof and accommodate long-term department growth, while at the same time, support and encourage a broad shift in the culture of adult behavior.

**Exposing the Building**—Structurally, the school building was in exceptional shape; however, not knowing what lay within walls or beneath floors had the potential to impact design and budget. As areas were exposed, these unknowns shaped the design in beautiful and surprising ways.
ASSETS

A North Star—When design of the Hammerlun Center began, it was emphasized that the expectations of the Learner Profile wouldn’t apply to just students. Every single person was a learner in Georgetown ISD. As each space was designed, it became a reflection of the Learner Profile, emphasizing:

- Communication and collaboration
- Creativity and innovation
- Inquiry and exploration
- Adaptability
- Personal responsibility
- Successful and respectful relationships

A Bold Leader—The district had a leader who was bold and sure of the vision. That vision was supported by leaders at all levels in GISD. The design team also played a key role; the team listened and was responsive to the vision, helping the school district bring their new leadership center to life. The district had gone through a similar process with the design team for four previous projects; they were comfortable with each other and used the appropriate push and pull to move the project forward.

A Beautiful Palette—The nearly 100-year old building had great bones and very few load-bearing partitions. The team opened up the space, utilizing the existing columns to anchor or divide spaces. The exposed concrete set the tone for the design aesthetic. This appreciation for rawness played out across the building. Underneath the existing flooring, original pine wood floors were discovered. They were refinished or salvaged (a conference table was constructed locally from wood pulled from the floors.) Behind walls, clay tiles were exposed; in some areas, specialty glass marker boards were installed over tiles so the space could be efficiently used while retaining its beauty.

The exterior architecture of the building was beautiful and worth saving. It was in good condition and required minimal refurbishment.

An Emphasis on Furniture—Like all aspects of the facility, furniture was purposefully designed. The team toured multiple showrooms to get a feel for what supported their vision best.

In the superintendent’s office, chairs with writing surfaces are arranged in the entry, allowing district leaders to work in close proximity for greater collaboration. Sit-to-stand desks, soft seating and a variety of small-group spaces and focus rooms create choice for staff in workspaces. These same solutions can be re-arranged to accommodate growth and evolving needs. Within the Professional Learning Center, everything is movable, permitting a great variety of configurations for training, summits and large-group meetings.
Within the superintendent’s office, furniture was selected to create touch-down spots where district leadership could work in close proximity. Refinished pine wood floors and a sleek color palette create a natural elegance.
BUILDING HISTORY

VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY
The historic school building that became the Hammerlun Center for Leadership and Learning holds special meaning to the community; many local residents attended school there, others appreciated the architecture and history. It was important to celebrate the past while considering the future. The exterior remained largely untouched while the interior was designed to represent the values and future of the school district. It is also a community building, with spaces for people to gather, appreciate the site and support education.

The site was chosen by the district because of its history. It felt appropriate to take a bold step into the future within the same building that marked the beginning of Georgetown ISD all those years ago.

A Community Icon—Georgetown ISD’s leadership center is named the Hammerlun Center for Leadership and Learning. It was dedicated in memory of Jerry Hammerlun, a long-time community member and community leader. Jerry was passionate about mentoring future leaders and ensuring his community embraced the future while honoring the past. He played a critical role in the vision of the new administration building before his passing in June 2017.

PROPERTY IS DONATED AS SITE OF FUTURE COLLEGE
1875

COLLEGE IS ESTABLISHED
1900

PROPERTY IS SOLD TO THE CITY
1916

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT IS CHARTERED
1917

DISTRICT’S FIRST HIGH SCHOOL IS CONSTRUCTED AND OPENED
1924

GYMNASIUM/CAFETERIA IS ADDED TO ORIGINAL BUILDING
1948

BAND HALL IS ADDED TO CAMPUS
1965

BUILDING IS REPURPOSED AS A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
1975

BUILDING IS REPURPOSED AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1987

CULT CLASSIC IS FILMED ON CAMPUS
1993

SECOND CLASSROOM BUILDING IS ADDED TO CAMPUS
2001

BUILDING BECOMES TEMPORARY HOME FOR A MIDDLE SCHOOL
2017

BUILDING OPENS AS CENTER FOR LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING
2018
Refurbishments were conducted with support from the local historical society. Masonry stone was cleaned and improvements were made to pathways and railings in compliance with accessibility standards. New landscaping was designed to celebrate the existing architectural detailing and enhance the site. Benches were made with salvaged brick from neighboring schools; tuckpointed brick was used to further preserve the existing building. LED bulbs were retrofitted into lamp posts.
EDUCATIONAL VISION AND GOALS

Every space in the Hammerlun Center supports the district’s Strategic Framework, which encompasses the Learner Profile. Administrators are expected to behave in the same way they encourage teachers and students to behave: with a mind toward collaboration and choice. As such, the foundation of design is rooted in reinforcing relationship building, engagement, learning and innovation.

CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING

As the facility came together, many voices were heard—in the form of formal meetings and impromptu discussion. Leadership and personnel talked about efficiencies, collaboration, how to group departments, closed door versus open door, who needs private space and who can use a focus room. A lot of back-and-forth shaped the solution. The team thought critically about where conference rooms and focus rooms should be placed; what type of furniture was required for each department; and which departments had greater public access needs versus increased privacy.

As a result, a variety of “learning” spaces were created. Walls within the historic building were removed. Open office space replaced hallways and classrooms. Departments that were separated by miles were now connected visually and physically. Instead of calling a colleague the next office down, peers began reaching out on a more personal level. Even a small change of moving all refrigerators and microwaves into a single location in the cafeteria supported the goal of increased collaboration and engagement. Within the new administration building, people were sharing in ways that were authentic and impactful.

ADAPTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY

There are very few spaces that aren’t open either physically or visually to other areas. This is reflective of what’s found in GISD schools. Peers easily collaborate and move around; they have choice in how and where they engage with each other. Walls and furniture move, and spaces flex to accommodate small and large groups. Workspace is designed to adapt to growth and evolving needs with simple shifts in furniture.

“The thing that makes the Hammerlun Center unique is the flexibility of the space. Every element can be manipulated to meet the need. You have features that amplify the learning environment. This space affords so many different opportunities to organize yourself or do work or access things in a different manner. You’re really only limited by your own creativity.”

BRYAN HALLMARK, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF OPERATIONS AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP
Transparency and openness is not limited to staff. At the highest levels of leadership, everyone is on display and given opportunity to model collaborative behavior.

Glazing and pivot doors allow privacy and security or openness as appropriate.
As the team diagrammed adjacencies, they established categories of space that would help the district reshape behaviors and culture through the lens of the Learner Profile.
A REFLECTION OF THE LEARNER PROFILE

WORKPLACE
- Shared workspace that enhances communication and feedback
- Conference rooms and common areas that provide choice for teams

COLLABORATION
- Flexibility within the Professional Learning Center to inquire and problem solve, to seek support from peers

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
- A makerspace to explore and test curriculum
- Comfortable spaces that build connectedness and positive relationships

FOCUS
- Focus rooms that afford privacy and reflection
OUTREACH / COMMUNITY

The auditorium is the central feature, signifying the convergence of history and future. It serves as Board Room and community space. The period’s aesthetic and detailing were retained by matching the original chairs, cleaning up the proscenium, utilizing an acoustic gyp ceiling and acoustic panels, retrofitting the original light fixtures and adding recessed Mecho shades. The dias is made from reclaimed wood and can be moved to accommodate a variety of functions.
FLEXIBILITY / ADAPTABILITY
The auditorium was enhanced with the addition of a collaboration space. A movable glass partition keeps the space intimate or opens it up for larger crowds during assemblies.
FLEXIBILITY / ADAPTABILITY
The Professional Learning Center flexes between a single large space up to six small enclosed rooms. Used as the district’s training center, it features drop-down reels, flexible furniture, whiteboards, pin-up space and display screens. Similar functional elements are used inside the district’s schools; teachers are training and testing curriculum in relevant environments.
“This is the place where the adults in our organization come to learn. As learners, they can experience learning in a different space. It allows a teacher, who’s sitting in that learning experience, to be inspired to implement some of those same practices and know it will be impactful.”

LINDSAY HARRIS, CHIEF STRATEGIST FOR LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE
The Hammerlun Center for Leadership and Learning is an adaptive re-use of a historic school building. The interior was the focus of the renovation, with the intent to create a forward-thinking and progressive adult learning center that maintained the integrity of the original building.

Split between community, office and learning space, each area can be manipulated to meet a variety of needs through the use of furniture, movable walls and collaborative and focus rooms. The solution creates a foundation for intention in use; team members must think critically about the type of space they need and how it should be arranged, whether working as an individual or within a group.

The existing structure already benefited from expansive windows; however, removal of walls and use of transparency between offices allowed natural light to spill through the corridors. As walls were torn down, the building revealed a richness in the material palette that inspired unique execution in design. Raw elements original to the building were celebrated. Existing clay tiles, bricks, concrete structure and wood floors were expressed beautifully against contrasting clean lines.

LED lighting is used throughout. In the auditorium, original light fixtures were removed, retrofitted and re-installed. A Red-List free carpet was selected for offices, contributing to improved indoor air quality. Motion sensors control lighting, and high efficiency mechanical units and HVAC controls manage temperature schedules, reducing energy use.

A Variable Refrigerant Flow System was used on the first floor of the main building. It provides an energy efficient solution that works well with design intent. The first-floor deck had minimal clearance for duct work between it and the wood-slat ceiling. The VRF system was a perfect complement.

“This space exemplifies what happens when you don’t let go of the past as far as who you are, but really think about if you’re becoming what your people need you to become. If you aren’t, you need to be willing to admit that, and then create the space that will facilitate the behaviors that truly allow your people to be the adults that your children need them to be.”

DR. FRED BRENT, SUPERINTENDENT, GEORGETOWN ISD
Three buildings on the site were retrofitted to meet the district’s current (and future) vision. Functional elements support professional learning, workplace and community needs. Collaborative spaces and focus areas benefit all users.
The open office environment allows collaboration within and between departments. With an open plan, acoustics were critical. Feeling that acoustical ceilings would deter from the aesthetic; the design team utilized white noise systems and acoustic baffles. Seating and floor finishes were also carefully considered to assist with sound levels in work areas.
The design blends the historic building’s rawness with modern materials. Refurbished floors display a natural elegance. Clay tiles, concrete columns and cor-ten steel installations enhance the natural aesthetic. Porcelain tile and polished concrete are used in public spaces. Wood slat ceilings tie the three buildings together and bring warmth to the space.
COMMUNITY CONTEXT
The community is represented in all aspects of the project. The building and its history belong to them. To further extend open arms to the community, a reception and exhibit space was included in the main entry. The gallery will soon be home to a historical exhibit, with space for student art to be displayed. The walls move to increase security for sensitive artifacts. The lobby and gallery can also be used for gatherings and special events.
The district serves multiple communities and high schools. Use of color was discussed in terms of equitability. To preserve the originality of the building, and maintain neutrality in school pride, a muted palette was selected. Wood elements were used to bring warmth to the space.
EDUCATIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
The Hammerlun Center blends past with future; it reflects a school district that embraced a progressive approach to instruction and professional learning. The opening of the center was the next step forward in empowering educators who, in turn, inspire students. The facility removed barriers and, within a few short months of opening, behaviors changed, more feedback was asked for and given, and adults were modeling collaboration greater than ever.

The Learner Profile is at the center of everything that occurs in the district. The design is emblematic of it through its adjacencies, choice of furniture, intersection of history and future, branding and its ability to shift with the district as it grows.

ACHIEVES SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY GOALS
The decision to house the leadership center within a historic school building is a reminder of who GISD is at all levels. The investment into the space was significant, not just from a budget standpoint, but from the time it took to imagine a whole new system of schools, learning, curriculum, behaviors and culture. The opening of the Hammerlun Center is the culmination of over five years of targeted work, and as such, there is a great deal of pride in what the school district and design team accomplished.

In the words of the superintendent, “…in the past we may have been quick to patch a problem and move down the road. Now, it seems there’s deeper thinking going on because there are more conversations happening. I have been impressed with the type of product we produce now, because it seems we are more intentional in this space.”

While the space has led to positive change for staff and leadership, it has also impacted teachers and the greater community. Teachers have benefited from and enjoyed the opportunity to learn within the Hammerlun Center. The flexibility and completeness of the Professional Learning Center enhance the training experience. Educators appreciate the options before them, and feel that the space was imagined and designed on behalf of them and their students. They are able to test curriculum and train within an environment that looks and feels like the space they teach in at their home campus.

The center has removed barriers between adults. Putting people in a room that are mission driven like we are, they are going to naturally pull towards one another to solve problems. I never dreamed this space would change us this quickly.”

DR. FRED BRENT, SUPERINTENDENT, GEORGETOWN ISD
UNINTENDED RESULTS

Outside Interest—Groups outside of GISD also utilize Hammerlun Center. Parents and potential parents are frequent guests; and local organizations such as PTA, Chamber of Commerce and the Education Foundation hold meetings within the building. The departmental adjacencies, thought for public versus private needs and incorporation of flexible meeting space allows greater connectivity to all community members.

Notably, the Professional Learning Center attracts interest from education-focused entities from around the state. It’s an exciting and modern space; everything a group needs to be successful is within the environment.

Early Buy-in—When construction was underway, leaders throughout the district capitalized on the opportunity to exhibit the desired behaviors ahead of the move. They “unplugged” from their offices, began touching down in lobbies, break rooms and conference rooms. They shared workspace, and found these small shifts were already impacting their behaviors.

Within months of being in their new space at the Hammerlun Center, GISD staff found themselves working more efficiently. They were spending more time problem solving with their peer across the desk, as opposed to spending time typing an email. Team members can’t help but be mobile, look around and see what their colleagues are doing, and as a result, actively participate in ways that a closed-off office wouldn’t permit.
The care that was taken to renovate and refurbish the historic school building was notable. The community was delivered a building that paid homage to their past; that they could access and utilize; and that retained the historic grace that has defined it since 1924.